97-84089-6

Finley, William Wilson

Mississippi-Alabama fair

[n.p.]

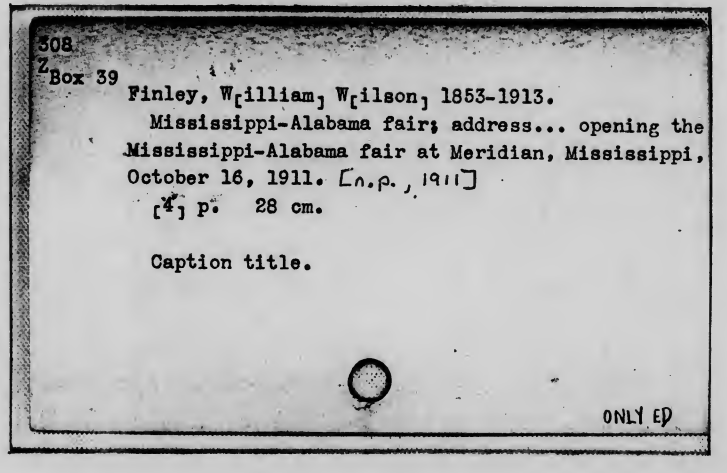
[1911]

97-84089-6
MASTER NEGATIVE #

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
PRESERVATION DIVISION

BIBLIOGRAPHIC MICROFORM TARGET

ORIGINAL MATERIAL AS FILMED - EXISTING BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD



RESTRICTIONS ON USE: *Reproductions may not be made without permission from Columbia University Libraries.*

TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm REDUCTION RATIO: 9:1 IMAGE PLACEMENT: (IA) IIA IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 5-15-97 INITIALS: PB

TRACKING # : MSH 20826.

FILMED BY PRESERVATION RESOURCES, BETHLEHEM, PA.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC IRREGULARITIES

MAIN ENTRY: Finley, William Wilson

Mississippi-Alabama fair

Bibliographic Irregularities in the Original Document:

List all volumes and pages affected; include name of institution if filming borrowed text.

_____Page(s) missing/not available:_____

_____Volume(s) missing/not available:_____

_____Illegible and/or damaged page(s):_____

_____

_____Page(s) or volume(s) misnumbered:_____

_____Bound out of sequence:_____

_____Page(s) or volume(s) filmed from copy borrowed from:_____

_____

X Other: unpaginated - [4] pages

_____

_____Inserted material:_____

TRACKING#: MSH20826

308
Z
Box 39

MISSISSIPPI-ALABAMA FAIR

Meridian
Miss.
1853-
1913

Address by W. W. Finley, President, Southern Railway Company, Opening the Mississippi-Alabama Fair at Meridian, Mississippi, October 16, 1911.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The occasion which has brought us together to-day is one of the utmost importance to the States of Mississippi and Alabama. We are here to inaugurate an institution which I believe will be of far-reaching influence in the development and progress of this entire region. The Mississippi-Alabama Fair is to be more than an exposition of the best products of this section. It is to be pre-eminently an educational institution.

Any fair or exposition is in some measure educational. The men and women who attend it simply for the purpose of being amused and entertained unconsciously absorb instruction and cannot avoid carrying away ideas that will be helpful. The public-spirited men who have organized this Fair have not been content with making it merely incidentally instructive. They have wisely planned to make it distinctively educational, and to supplement the exhibits by a practical course of instructive lectures and talks by experts in various lines of agricultural work and in improving the farmer's road to market over the country highway. Many of the exhibits, in themselves, will prove highly educational, showing what our most successful farmers have been able to accomplish in the breeding of live stock and the growing of the great variety of crops for which this region is suited. Another educational feature will be found in the exhibits of improved farm implements and machinery.

I know that I voice the sentiments of all the people of this region in expressing our high appreciation of the enterprise and patriotism of the promoters of this Fair. They have planned and worked for many months and have given freely of their time and money to make the enterprise successful. I feel sure that the support which they will receive from the people of this region will be such as to insure the permanence of this Fair as an annual institution.

Although we are witnessing a substantial development of manufacturing in our towns and cities, this is pre-eminently an agricultural region. Its prosperity as a whole is dependent upon agricultural prosperity. I am glad to be able to state that I regard the outlook for the farmer, and especially for the farmer in the Southern section of the United States, as most encouraging. The number of consumers of farm products in the world is increasing from year to year, calling for a corresponding increase in farm production. While there are still areas in Africa and in some other parts of the world to be opened up, the increasing demand in the future must, I believe, be largely met by an increasing production in the regions already under cul-

IN EXCHANGE
Bureau of Railway Economics
DEC 13 1911

tivation. Fortunately, coincident with this necessity for increased production, we are living in an era when, more than ever before in the history of the world, agricultural problems are being scientifically studied and improved methods are being adopted.

It is particularly fortunate that this educational fair should be held just at this time, when the spread of the Mexican cotton boll weevil into localities East of the Mississippi River is bringing our farmers face to face with new problems. No method of exterminating the weevil has yet been found, but I have no fear as to the ability of the people of this region to cope with it. I know them to be courageous and I know that they are not going to be stampeded. It is not likely that a people who have passed through a devastating war and who have brought this region up to its present high level of prosperity would falter in the face of difficulties even more serious than those presented by the boll weevil.

I understand that, in a talk which he made in Meridian last spring, Mr. J. A. Evans, Principal Assistant in the Office of Farmers Co-operative Demonstration Work in the United States Agricultural Department, referred to the Mexican cotton boll weevil as "the advance agent of Southern prosperity." I believe that we shall realize that Mr. Evans was right and that, while the boll weevil will undoubtedly make necessary the adoption of different methods in the growing of cotton, it will really prove to be a blessing in disguise.

I believe that it would be a most serious mistake for our farmers to abandon cotton production. Our section of the United States has an economic advantage such as is enjoyed by no other region in the world in having a substantial monopoly in the production of the cotton supply of the world. Efforts are being made by European cotton spinners, with the encouragment of their governments, to increase cotton production in various parts of Africa and other regions. Thus far they have not been able to threaten the supremacy of the South and I believe that our farmers should make such a determined fight to maintain their present great advantage as will serve to discourage efforts to develop new cotton-producing localities.

The boll weevil will not prove to be an insuperable obstacle to this. When this insect first appeared in localities West of the Mississippi River many farmers suffered serious losses for some years after it had invaded their fields. The problem of controlling it was taken up by the scientific experts of the United States Agricultural Department, State Departments of Agriculture, agricultural colleges, and progressive farmers, with the result that it was found that successful and profitable growing of cotton under boll weevil conditions was a matter of improved cultural methods. There are other insects and certain birds that feed upon it to some extent, but, unless these natural enemies can be greatly multiplied, they will be of little practical assistance to the farmer.

A successful fight against the boll weevil involves intensive farming and this, in some cases, may require a reduction of the acreage that can properly be planted and cultivated by a given number of men and teams. This does not mean a decrease in the yield of cotton, but an increase in the production per acre. It leaves land available for other crops and diversified farming thus comes in, not as a substitute for cotton growing, but as one of the factors in the fight against the weevil. Diversified farming and crop rotation should be practiced in the cotton belt in any event, for cotton will do better in rotation with other crops than on land where it is grown year after year without change. Extensive experiments have demonstrated conclusively that soil productivity can best be maintained and increased by crop rotation combined

May - 18 Aug - 16

with the proper use of fertilizers. This is particularly important in boll weevil territory for the reason that it not only gives the farmer the advantage of better soil, but also because of the fact that he will have fewer weevils to contend with during the early and most critical part of the season on land that has been in some other crop than cotton the previous year. In so far as the boll weevil leads to diversification, at least to the extent of raising all the farm products consumed on the farm, it will be beneficial.

I believe that the weevil is also benefiting our farmers by leading them to give more attention to live stock. Natural conditions in this region are particularly favorable for this branch of farming. I doubt whether there is any other region in the United States where either pork or beef can be produced more cheaply than in Mississippi and Alabama. You have an abundance of forage crops and your long grazing seasons and short, mild winters reduce the cost of feeding to a minimum. There are, all through this region, large areas growing up in natural pastures and capable of supporting many more animals than at present.

In the past the prevalence of the cattle tick, which carries the germ of the Texas Fever, has been an obstacle to the most profitable production of beef cattle and to the most successful dairy farming in this region. Science has rendered important service to our farmers—first, by demonstrating that Texas Fever is communicated only by the tick, and second, by devising methods for the eradication of the tick. We now know that, by united effort, any locality can be completely freed from the tick, and kept free and danger of the Texas Fever and all of the other disadvantages caused by this pest can be eliminated. The work of tick eradication is being taken up enthusiastically in county after county by the farmers in co-operation with the State and Federal authorities. Each year the area within the quarantine line established by the Federal government to prevent the spread of the pest is being reduced and we can look forward to a time in the near future when the entire Southeastern section will be free from the cattle tick and the Texas Fever. I think we are all agreed as to the desirability of getting rid of the tick and having the quarantine line abolished. There may be differences of opinion as to the best methods of carrying on the work, but we should try to reconcile those differences and every owner of cattle—whether he have but a single cow or a large herd—should do his share by getting his own farm freed from the insect with the least possible delay and by submitting cheerfully to such regulations as may be necessary to make the work in his neighborhood successful. We should keep constantly in mind that whatever present expense and inconvenience may be involved will be more than made up when the danger of Texas Fever has been permanently removed and when the quarantine line no longer stands across the highway to the cattle markets of the Northern States.

I am glad that the railway companies that I have the honor to represent are in a position to offer co-operation with the people of this region in the solution of their agricultural problems. We are doing this through our Cotton Culture Department, an organization formed for the purpose of being helpful, with capable men who have had practical experience with the boll weevil. Their service is free to any farmers along our lines desiring their co-operation and I trust that every one here to-day who is familiar with their work will concur in our opinion that it has been substantially helpful.

I hope, Mr. Chairman, that it will be clearly understood that the policy we have adopted has not for

its purpose the taking charge of agriculture in any state or of dictating methods. We have been prompted solely by a desire to be helpful and to supplement the work of the State agricultural authorities and the United States Agricultural Department. We have worked at all times in the closest harmony with the State Commissioners, State Agricultural Colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture and I am glad to acknowledge the great assistance we have received from them and to express our high appreciation of the uniform courtesy with which they have welcomed our assistance in the great work they are doing.

I believe that the Mississippi-Alabama Fair will be an important factor in the development of this region. We have been glad to co-operate with its management so far as we properly could by making an exhibit and in other ways. I esteem very highly the honor conferred upon me by the management of the Fair in asking me to make the opening address and thus to identify the railway companies which I have the honor to represent with this great educational enterprise. I am assured by the management that this is to be one of a series of annual fairs to be held in Meridian, carrying forward the splendid educational work inaugurated here to-day. I hope and believe that each one of these fairs will eclipse its predecessor and will illustrate in its exhibits the rapid progress which I believe that this region is destined to make.

As a native of Mississippi I have never lost touch with the State. I am proud of its history. I know that it has advantages of soil and climate which are unsurpassed in any other part of the United States. I know its splendid people and have unbounded faith in their ability to overcome any obstacles which they may encounter and make them stepping-stones to higher achievements. And now, in discharge of the duty imposed upon me, I have the honor to declare the Mississippi-Alabama Fair of 1911 formally opened.

MSH 20826

END OF
TITLE